Dads and Postnatal Depression

New dads can also suffer from depression following the birth of a baby. This is more likely to happen if your partner is experiencing depression, you have had previous depression, or you are a first time dad.

How do you feel?
• Look at the checklist overleaf and if you are suffering from 2 or more of the symptoms then you should seek help immediately
• You are more likely to recover quickly if you acknowledge the problem. Consider asking for support or practical help from family, friends or consulting your GP
• Remember as a new dad it is important that you look after your own physical and emotional wellbeing, so that you can look after your family as well as yourself

For more information: www.fatherhoodinstitute.org & www.dad.info

Information for dads on looking after your partner

If your partner is not already doing so you must encourage her to seek professional help. The sooner she does this the quicker she will recover. Postnatal Depression is a serious illness but you can get better.

Want more help and information?

There are lots of organisations which offer further support and information forums, dads, partners, family and friends who are affected by Postnatal Depression.

Useful websites

- The Joanne (Joe) Bingley Memorial Foundation
  www.joebingleymemorialfoundation.org.uk
- NHS Direct
  www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
- The Samaritans
  www.samaritans.org
  Tel: 08457 909090
- The Angela Harrison Charitable Trust
  www.help4mums.org
- Netmums
  www.netmums.org
- The Patients Association
  www.patients-association.com
- Parentline Plus
  www.parentlineplus.org.uk
- Elaine Hanzak
  www.hanzak.com
- Greatvine
  www.greatvine.com

Further reading

- Eyes without Sparkle
  A Journey Through Postnatal Illness
  Elaine Hanzak
- Feelings after Birth
  The NCT Book of Postnatal Depression
  Heather Welford
- When Baby Brings the Blues
  Ariel Dalfern
- This Isn’t What I Expected
  Overcoming Postpartum Depression
  Karen R Kleiman & Valerie D Raskin
- Saving Grace
  Grace Sharock
- When Baby Brings the Blues
  Ariel Dalfern
- Supportive Postnatal Women into Motherhood
  Lyn Bertam

Baby’s arrived... so why am I not happy?

Other practical things you can help with that will make a huge difference
• Keep visitors to a minimum
• Encourage your partner to take rest and time out for themselves
• Cook a meal and help with night feeds

Other practical things you can help with that will make a huge difference
• Offer to take the baby out for a walk or round to friends
• Remember to tell your partner of your love and give hugs
• Try not to make too many sexual demands - allow time for recovery

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Baby’s arrived... so why am I not happy?

People expect that having a baby brings about immediate joy and happiness but as a new mum you may be very far from feeling this straight away.

It can be difficult to adjust to the big changes and the demands made by a new baby. Soon after giving birth, you may feel weepy and irritable. If these feelings are in the early days you may be suffering from the baby blues.

The baby blues are so common that they are considered normal. We don’t know exactly how many mothers experience them, but it’s likely to be somewhere between 5 to 8 mums out of every 10.

You may feel that being a mum will always be like this. Don’t worry, things will get better, and quite quickly, too. The baby blues is not an illness, and usually lasts for just a few days.

If the blues continue and seem to be getting worse you could be suffering from Postnatal Depression.

How do you feel?

Are you or your partner suffering from any of the following since the birth of the baby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>No interest in sex</th>
<th>Poor concentration</th>
<th>Loss of appetite or over eating</th>
<th>Lack of confidence</th>
<th>Thoughts about harming yourself or the baby</th>
<th>Difficulty making decisions</th>
<th>Inability to relax</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tearful and feeling low</td>
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<td>Cut off from things, isolated or unable to enjoy anything</td>
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<td>Unusually irritable</td>
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<td>Unable to cope</td>
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<td>Guilt about not coping or not loving the baby enough</td>
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<td>Difficulty sleeping</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difficulty bonding with the baby</td>
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If you or your partner are experiencing some of these symptoms regulary and for more than two weeks it could be that you have Postnatal Depression (PND). Levels of this can be mild, moderate or severe.

SEEK HELP NOW! The sooner you talk to someone and seek help the quicker you will recover. Don’t suffer in silence!

You may want to share this checklist with someone close to you or you could take this list to share with your GP, Midwife or Health Visitor.

Around 1 in 1000 new mothers can develop a potentially life-threatening illness called Puerperal Psychosis. Although rare, the symptoms are extreme, bizarre and in some cases, dangerous. Seek emergency assistance immediately if you experience a mother behaving in such ways.

Who should you contact?

A health professional who you feel comfortable with. This could be a GP, Midwife or Health Visitor.

- If you can, take your partner or a friend with you for moral support
- Remember these health professionals are there to listen and have the knowledge and skills to help you get better
- As well as speaking to a health professional, you may find it helpful to talk to an understanding and sympathetic member of your family or friend about how you are feeling
- You may find it helpful to be open and honest with other new mums
- They may be feeling similar and you can have mutual support

Helping yourself

This is not your fault but you need to take some responsibility towards getting yourself well again. Here are some things that you can and should do immediately.

Do

- Believe that you will get better and recognise that you are unwell and not a failure
- Take every opportunity to get plenty of rest/sleep
- Accept any offers of help graciously
- Get enough nourishment
- Have a daily treat
- Get some exercise e.g. a walk round the park with the pram
- Find time to talk and have some fun with your partner

Remember you don’t have to

- Try and be superhuman... if something doesn’t get done there is always tomorrow
- Blame yourself or your partner
- Make any major decisions e.g. moving house or job

It is important to remember...

Postnatal Depression is a real illness and like any illness it is treatable!

PND is the most common post-natal complication

Be patient with yourself! It may take time but you can and will get there!

Remember that your body has been through an enormous change

Let the tears flow. You may feel terrible now but you will get through it and recover

Get some rest and accept some TLC from those around you

None of this is your fault so there is nothing to feel ashamed or guilt

Remember that your body has been through an enormous change